DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 083 493 CG 008 324

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TITLE	The Social Structure of Violence in Childhood and Approval of Violence as an Adult.
PUB DATE	Aug 73
NOTE	19p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Adults; Childhood; *Early Experience; Imitation; Learning; *Observational Learning; *Role Theory; Social Attitudes; *Socialization; Social Structure; *Violence

ABSTRACT

This paper tests the idea that the experience of violence in childhood constitutes a factor leading to the approval of adult violence for achieving socially desirable goals. Using the data from a national survey conducted in 1968, the study constructs indexes on Interpersonal Violence Approval, National Violence Approval, and Political Violence Approval to measure the following aspects of violence experienced in childhood: observing violence, carrying out violence, and being the victim of violence. By computing the correlation of each measure of violence experienced to indexes of violence approval, the study tests the hypothesis that violence in childhood relates to adult approval of violence. Results show that approval of interpersonal violence most highly relates to experiencing violence as a child. The authors conclude that a "social structural theory of violence" featuring social learning and role-modeling has more import for the study than does a "culture of violence theory." (Authors/LAA)

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ED 083493

August, 1973

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THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF VIOLENCE IN CHILDHOOD AND APPROVAL OF VIOLENCE AS AN ADULT*

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A national survey conducted in 1968 for the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence revealed that every second person among those interviewed supported the statement "Justice may have been a little rough-and-ready in the days of the Old West, but things worked better then than they do now with all the legal red tape." In response to other questions, one out of four agreed that "groups have the right to train their members in marksmanship and underground-warfare tactics in order to help put down any conspiracies that might occur in the country;" and one out of ten Americans said that they would "participate in a physical assault or armed action against a group of people who are deliberately blocking rush-hour traffic to protest the war in Vietnam."

As might be expected, the number of Americans who approve of using violence against people of other nations is much greater. In fact, two out of three citizens agreed that "In dealing with other countries in the world, we are frequently justified in using military force."

The Violence Commission survey data, and much other similar evidence, such as the 84 per cent who approve of capital punishment (Blumenthal, Andrews and Head, 1972), have led some observers to characterize the United States as having a "culture of violence." This is correct up to a certain point. If, however, one comes to use the idea of a culture or a subculture of violence as an explanation for the high level of actual violence which occurs in American society, there are problems. One problem we see is that such an explanation does not account for the existence of these cultural norms. How did US culture come to approve of or to value violence? Why does it continue to do so? Such a question is not only important for theories of violence; it is also important in determining national policy in respect

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to violence. If "culture" is a main cause, then educational and other policies designed to modify this culture are in order, such as the current mass media campaigns against drug use. But if, as we believe, the cultural norms concerning violence primarily reflect an adaptation to certain aspects of American social structure, then alterations in these underlying social structural elements are a more appropriate mode of response to the problem of violence.

The study reported in this paper will not settle this important issue. But it does provide some evidence relevent to a social structural theory of violence. Specifically, rather than treating cultural norms approving of violence as a given and investigating the extent to which such norms are correlated with actual violence, we take the opposite approach. That is, the focus of this paper is on how people learn to approve of violence. We start with violence which occured in the childhood of our respondents. The data analysis examines the question of whether such childhood violence is associated with the extent to which, as adults, those respondents approve of violence.

There are a large number of factors which can and probably do influence the extent to which societies and their individual members approve or disapprove of violence. The present paper is limited to only one group of such causal factors: the experience of violence in childhood in the form of observing violence, committing violence, and being the victim of the violent acts of others.

A fundamental assumption underlying this investigation is that the disposition to use violence is a learned behavior and that much of this takes place in childhood through actually experiencing violence. Thus, the general hypothesis of the study is that the more a person <u>experiences</u> violence as a child, the more likely he is as an adult to <u>approve</u> of the use of violence as a means of social control.[1/]

Evidence to support this "experience theory" of violence is admittedly scanty. However, certain studies hint at its plausibility. The research of

Bandura and his colleagues on imitative and modeling behavior show that children and young adults imitate the behavior of aggressive models in experimental situations. For example, Bandura and Houston (1961a) and Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961b) show that children who watched models attacking a Bobo doll were significantly more aggressive in their own play than the other two control groups. Indeed, there was often remarkable direct imitation of the actual aggressive play of the model. Studies of violence shown on television have echoed these findings: children learn behavior, at least in part, by the process of imitating someone else's behavior--even though no normative guidelines are put forth (Singer, 1971). In fact, in most situations the norms taught to and known by the children would probably run counter to the behavior exhibited.

Observing and experiencing violence tends to provide a powerful learning situation because (among other things) such experience provides the entire script for behavior, not just attitudes of approval or disapproval. Among the important elements of this script are the specific types of situations in which violence is used, the appropriate affective states, and the appropriate response to such situations, i.e., the type and intensity of violence. Thus, the experience theory perspective which guides this research, and especially the concepts of role-modeling and role-practice indicate that attitudes and behavior modalities may be acquired independent of cultural prescriptions and proscriptions. People tend to practice that behavior which is in evidence around them, even though the behavior may conflict with cultural standards. If the conflict between the behavior practiced and the cultural standards is too great, the behavior may be dropped. But our guess is that the more common resolution of this discrepency is for the individual to resolve the conflict by adopting attitudes which approve of violence (Bem, 1970). If enough people do this, then of course, the societal norm changes. Behavior, therefore, can exert a powerful influence upon attitudes, beliefs, and cultural norms.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Shortcomings of Studies on Imitation and Modeling. The previously mentioned experimental studies have several serious shortcomings. First, such

experiments, while enjoying the benefits of rigorous control over the relevant variables, suffer from the fact that the experimental treatments and the effects measured are short-term. Given the nature of the experimental situation, long-term influences cannot be estimated. Thus, critics have questioned the value of the "one shot" film of an aggressive model. It is quite possible that viewing television daily makes the situation very much more complex. Repeated exposure to violent films could have either a cumulative effect in building up the potential for imitation or a "cathartic" effect.[2/]

A second shortcoming of the experiments on modeling is related to the first. Ethical controls on the experimental situation mean that practically every study involves play situations and attack on inanimate objects. It remains an unanswered question whether aggressive play is at all the same as a direct assault upon another child. Indeed, the studies tend to confuse aggressive fantasy, healthy anger, and hostile wit or sarcasm with direct violence. Yet, if we are to fully understand the effects of observing violence, there must also be evidence of direct aggression on others, taken directly from real life.

Third, almost all of the experimental studies involve nursery school children of predominantly middle-class backgrounds. Such children may provide compliant imitators of adults or other children in an experimental setting, but leave open the question of whether lower class children would manifest comparable patterns. Neither do they provide us with much information on adolescents or adults. It is hazardous therefore, to make broad generalizations about reactions to observation of violence from such a select sample.

The Violence Commission Survey. The research to be reported is a re-analysis of the nation-wide sample survey data collected for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969).[3/] This data has its own set of limitations, noteably problems connected with the accuracy of self-reported behavior. However, it has two advantages over the laboratory studies just discussed. First, the data cut across social classes, sexes,

ethnic groups, and age groups. Second, unlike the laboratory studies, it enables us to analyze the effects of experiencing real-life violence. Thus, the Violence Commission data can provide information on a representative sample of the population and data on critical aspects of violence which are needed to compliment the experimental studies.

HYPOTHESES

Observation of Violence in Childhood. Attitudes may be acquired in a number of ways. It is most common to think of them as being learned from the attitudes held by significant others in the person's life, expecially parents. For example, it has repeatedly been shown that most young adults support the same political party as their parents (Nelson & Tallman, 1969). But attitudes can also be formed out of specific experiences. That is, a person can come to accept and approve of much of the behavior around him because he sees others engaging in that behavior; especially if they see other people obtain desired goals by using that behavior. We believe that children are extremely prone to acquire attitudes and beliefs in this way. Exposure to violent behavior at this stage will have deep seated and lasting effects on attitudes toward violence. As Singer (1971:31) points out,

> In new situations where a child is at loss for what to do he is likely to remember what he saw his parents do and behave accordingly, even occasionally to his own detriment. Indeed, adults when they become parents and are faced with the novelty of the role revert to the type behavior they saw their parents engage in when they were children sometimes against their current adult judgement.

On the basis of the studies of imitation which show that, in the short term, observation of violent behavior leads to imitation of that violent behavior, and the well established fact that children are extremely quick to adopt behavioral patterns in evidence around them, and finally, that attidues toward behavior may be set up to justify that behavior despite cultural guidelines to the contrary, the first major hypothesis is:

HO 1: The greater the observation of violence as a child, the greater the approval of violence in adult life.

Physical Involvement in Violence and Approval of Violent Behavior. Observation of violent behavior is only one aspect of participation in a violent social structure. /Exposure may take a more immediate form. One could be actively involved in the violence as a victim or the instigator. In either case, we would expect the learning situation to be an extremely intense one, and to exert considerable influence on one's subsequent attitude toward violence. Involvement with violence, it is argued, leads to acceptance of that violence. Sheer familiarity with violence inures one to its harmful effects. In most cases, the physically harmful effects are temporary. The victim or the loser soon gets over the physical damage. In the process, he may well see that his assailant has emerged having obtained what he wanted by the violent means. If the victim is a child, then he will see the value of spanking in controlling behavior even though he might resent it. If he is a teenage boy, even as the loser of a fight, he may well realize the value of success in a physical confrontation. These considerations lead to the second and third major hypotheses of the study.

HO 2: The more a child is a victim of violence in childhood, the greater his approval of violence in adult life.

HO 3: The more a child committs violent acts, the greater the approval of violence in adult life.

APPROVAL OF VIOLENCE AS A GENERAL CONCEPT

Violence is a multifaceted phenomenon. Situations in which violent behavior occurs can vary as widely as that of a parent spanking a child, two teenage boys in a knife fight, a vigalante mob, or a massacre in a war. In each case, violence is present but the context and meaning of the violent behavior is different. There are, therefore, arguments each way with regard

to grouping all of these behaviors under the single heading of "violence." They could be different aspects of the single underlying dimension--approval of violence--or they may be so dissimilar in meaning for most individuals that the single dimension of violence does little to relate them. If the latter is the case, they may well have a dissimilar etiology.

In this study, to take account of some of the differing types of violence, we have subdivided approval of violence into approval of three types of violence and computed indexes for each type as follows: Interpersonal Violence Approval (IVA), National Violence Approval (NVA), and Political Violence Approval (PVA).

The Interpersonal Violence Approval (IVA) index deals primarily with those acts of violence that take place at a face-to-face level, most often between friends and acquaintances. The National Violence Approval (NVA) index is concerned with acts of international aggression and includes questions on the Vietnam War. The Political Violence Approval (PVA) index focuses on acts of violence as means for achieving local and national political ends.

MEASUREMENT OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCE AND VIOLENCE APPROVAL

Within the limitations of a brief paper we can only summarize the measurement procedures employed (complete information may be found in Owens, 1973). The general procedure was to (1) select from the data available sets of items which, in our judgement, indexed the variables listed above, (2) convert the responses to ordinal form if they were not originally in that form, and (3) sum the resulting responses for each respondent. (4) The resulting indexes were then subject to item analysis. (5) Items which did not show a correlation with the total score of .20 or higher were dropped from the index.

Exposure to Violence Indexes. The three aspects of exposure to violence in childhood which are used as the independent variables in this study are shown in Table 1 along with the results of the item analysis.

Table 1. Item-Total Correlations for Exposure to Interpersonal Violence

Question No.*	Name of Item	Correlation (r) with Index
A. Interpersonal Violence Observed as a Child (IVO)		
27A1-R	Ever seen anyone slapped	.80
27A2-R	Ever seen anyone punched	.81
27A3-R	Ever seen anyone choked	.68
27A4-R	Ever seen anyone knifed	.76
27A5-R	Ever seen anyone shot	.75
B. Interpersonal Violence Received as a Child (IVR)		
25A-R	Ever been spanked	.34
26A1-R	Ever been slapped	.72
26A2-R	Ever been punched	.76
26A3-R	Ever been choked	.55
26A4-R	Ever been knifed	.67
26A5-R	Ever been shot	.63
C. Interpersonal Violence Committed as a Child (IVC)		
29A-R	Slapped/kicked	.87
30A-R	Beaten	.83

* R denotes that the variable has been recoded and may be a combination of two or three variables. If so, information of the recording and combining of these variables will be found in Appendix B, part one and two on Construction of Indices in Owens, 1973.

Table 1 about here

After completion of the item analyses of these indexes, the intercorrelation of the three indexes measuring these different aspects of exposure to violence was computed. The resulting correlations indicate that although the three aspects are clearly related to each other (and hence can be considered part of a pattern which we will call the social structure of violence in childhood), the correlations are also low enough (.41 to .63) to make it important to examine each aspect of this structure separately when testing the general hypothesis of the paper.[4]

Approval of Violence Indexes. Far more data were available in the Violence Commission interview schedule on approval-disapproval of violence than on the experience of violence in childhood. This made it possible to construct indexes with more items and presumably greater reliability. The items for each index and their correlations with the total scores are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

The intercorrelation of the three measures of violence approval is particularly crucial since as previously noted, there are some grounds for expecting that the three aspects will be correlated and some for expecting the opposite. For example, research in the "authoritarian personality" tradition (Adorno et. al., 1950; Lewis, 1971) suggests a personality type which tends to favor violence of all kinds ranging from spanking children to dropping atom bombs. Yet, as is apparent from the events of the last few years, there are many Vietnam War "doves" who favor domestic political violence as a means of ending the war.

Our results are consistent with both the authoritarian personality theory and the behavior of the militant doves. Consistent with the militant dove phenomenon is the finding of essentially zero correlation between the measures of National Violence Approval (pro-war attitudes) and Political Violence Approval (.02 for the total sample, .00 for males, and -.07 for females). At

Table 2. Item-Total Correlations for Violence Approval Indexes

Question No.*	Name of Item	Correlation (r) with Index
A. National Violence Approval (NVA)		
11C-R	Government too ready to use force	.60
11L-R	We are too ready to use force	.56
11Q-R	Killing civilians is unavoidable in war	.62
11H-R	Human nature means war is inevitable	.45
9A-R	Vietnam opinion	.67
B. Political Violence Approval (PVA)		
18A-R	Arms against tax law	.48
19A-R	Arms against suppression of criticising government	.66
20A-R	Arms against imprisoning negroes	.66
21A-R	Arms against shooting innocent people	.76
22A-R	Arms against war protestors	.50
23A4-R	Tomatoes against senator	.44
23A5-R	Empty bottles against senator	.29
23A6-R	Gun against senator	.22
C. Interpersonal Violence Approval (IVA)		
33A-R	Approve of spanking	.31
33B1-R	Approve of spanking if child is noisy	.28
33B2-R	Approve of spanking if child is disobedient	.31
33B3-R	Approve of spanking if child is expelled	.30
33B4-R	Approve of spanking if child is broken law	.34
34A-R	Approve of beating	.19
34B3-R	Approve of beating if expelled	.17
34B4-R	Approve of beating if broken law	.22
35A-R	Approve of husband slapping wife	.46
35B1-R	Approve of husband slapping wife if argument	.24
35B2-R	Approve of husband slapping wife if wife insults him	.34
35B3-R	Approve of husband slapping wife if wife flirting	.41
35B4-R	Approve of husband slapping wife if wife unfaithful	.48
36A-R	Approve of husband shooting wife	.25
36B4-R	Approve of husband shooting wife if unfaithful	.20
37A-R	Approve of wife slapping husbands face	.48
37B1-R	Approve of wife slapping husbands face if argument	.27
37B2-R	Approve of wife slapping husbands face if husband insulted	.40
37B3-R	Approve of wife slapping husbands face if husband flirting	.39
37B4-R	Approve of wife slapping husbands face if husband unfaithful	.49

Table 2 (continued). Item-Total Correlations for Violence Approval Indexes

Question No.*	Name of Item	Correlation (r) with Index
38A-R	Approve of wife shooting husband	.26
38B4-R	Approve of wife shooting husband if unfaithful	.20
39A-R	Approve of Teacher hitting student	.52
39B1-R	Approve of teacher hitting student if noisy in class	.32
39B2-R	Approve of teacher hitting student if disobedient	.44
39B3-R	Approve of teacher hitting student if destructive	.44
39B4-R	Approve of teacher hitting student if hit the teacher	.51
40A-R	Approve of teacher punching student	.26
40B4-R	Approve of teacher punching student if hit the teacher	.29
41A-R	Approve of policemen striking citizen	.54
41B1-R	Approve of policeman striking citizen if obscenity	.30
41B2-R	Approve of policeman striking citizen if demonstration	.30
41B3-R	Approve of policeman striking citizen if suspect murderer	.52
41B4-R	Approve of policeman striking citizen if escaping	.52
41B5-R	Approve of policeman striking citizen if attacking police	.52
42A-R	Approve policeman shooting citizen	.48
42B4-R	Approve policeman shooting citizen if escaping	.37
42B5-R	Approve policeman shooting citizen if attacking	.52
42B6-R	Approve policeman shooting citizen if threat of gun	.55
43A-R	Approve of teenager punching teenager	.24
43B1-R	Approve of teenager punching teenager if dislike	.50
43B2-R	Approve of teenager punching teenager if ridiculed	.47
43B3-R	Approve of teenager punching teenager if challenged	.57
43B4-R	Approve of teenager punching teenager if hit	.62
45A-R	Approve adult male strike adult male	.24
45B2-R	Approve adult male strike adult male if drunk	.54
45B3-R	Approve adult male strike adult male if hit child	.57
45B4-R	Approve adult male strike adult male if beating woman	.62
45B5-R	Approve adult male strike adult male if broken into mans house	.51
46A-R	Approve man choking stranger	.39

Table 2 (continued). Item-Total Correlations for Interpersonal Violence Approval

Question No.	Name of Item	Correlation (r) with Index
46B3-R	Approve man choking stranger if hit child	.45
46B4-R	Approve man choking stranger if beating woman	.48
46B5-R	Approve man choking stranger if assault and robbery	.50

* See footnote to Table 1.

the same time, the remaining two sets of correlations are consistent with the authoritarian personality theory. This is because Interpersonal Violence Approval was found to have low but consistently positive correlations with both National Violence Approval (r = .20, .23 and .16 for the total sample, the males and the females respectively) and Political Violence Approval (r = .28, .31, and .28).[5/] In all cases, however, the correlations show that each of these aspects of violence approval is sufficiently independent of the other to make it necessary to treat each as a separate dependent variable.

The Social Structure of Violence. The data on the intercorrelation of the violence experience measures with each other, and on the violence approval measures with each other, have more than methodological importance. The fact that the violence experienced measures have substantial correlations with each other suggests that certain people are simultaneously confronted with several different aspects of violence: they see violence between others, they receive violence from others, and they themselves act violently towards others. Thus, there seems to be what we might call a "social structure of violence," even if not a culture of violence. These correlations also have implications for the central issue of this paper: the effects of experiencing violence. Our reasoning is that if experiencing violence forms a pattern or syndrome, each element of the syndrome is more likely to have long term consequences because it tends to be consistent with the other two elements. It is time then to turn to the evidence on the central issue: to what extent is the experience of violence in childhood associated with approval of violence in adulthood.

EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE APPROVAL

This section will examine the relationship of each of the three aspects of exposure to violence (observed, received, and committed) to approval of each of the three types of violence (interpersonal, political, and

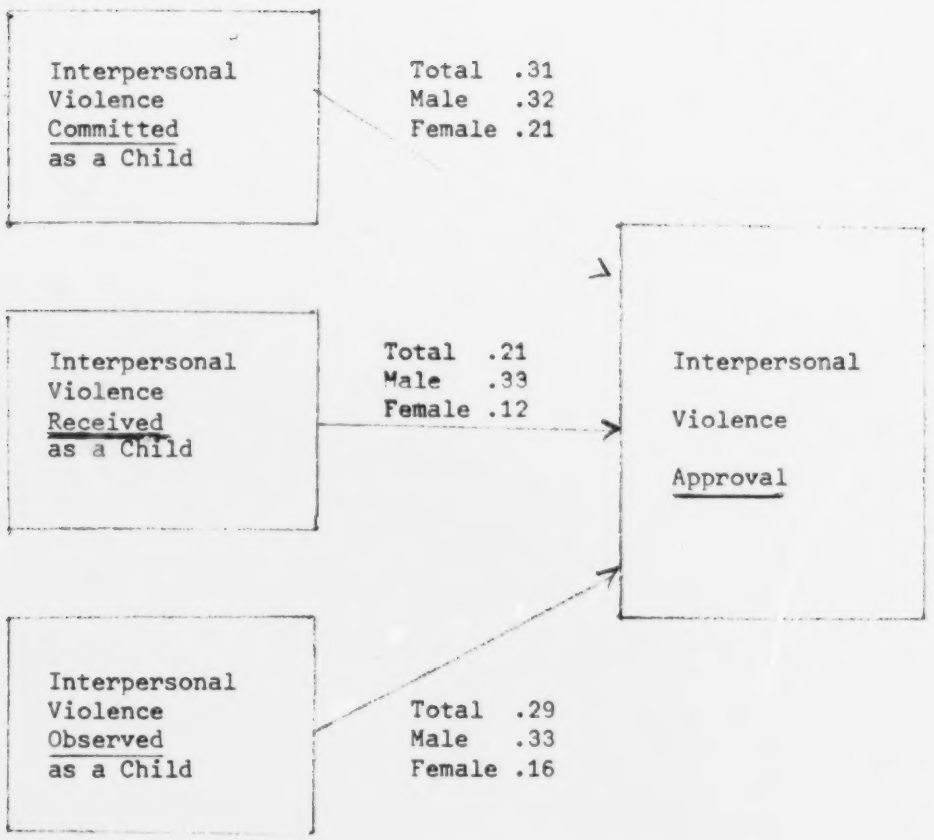

Figure 1. Correlation Between Exposure to Violence and Approval of Interpersonal Violence for Total Sample and by Sex.

national). Since it was shown in the previous section that approval of each of the three types of violence tends to be relatively independent of approval of the other types of violence, we will examine the childhood antecedents of each type separately, starting with approval of interpersonal violence.

Interpersonal Violence Approval.

Figure 1 shows that each of the three aspects of exposure to violence in

Figure 1 about here

childhood is moderately correlated with approval of interpersonal violence as an adult. Our major hypothesis was therefore substantiated. Furthermore, although the correlations are moderate, they are higher than might be expected since the time separation between the independent and dependent variables is so great. Clearly, the causes of approval of interpersonal violence are many and varied. In the years between exposure to childhood violence and adulthood, a multiplicity of factors are operating to influence the level of approval of violence. In these terms, therefore, a correlation of.3 assumes a different importance. Given that over-time the effects of exposure to childhood violence will be substantially reduced by the operation of other variables, the relationship found is of considerable interest.

Victimization and Approval. One might think that the victims of violence would be unlikely to favor further violent acts. Contrary to this line of reasoning, our data shows that being a victim of violent acts is associated with approval of violent acts as much as seeing or committing violence. These findings become plausible if one assumes that the victim observes that the instigator of violence is likely to obtain what he wants through violent means.

The equal relation of the different aspects of childhood exposure to violence to approval of violence may be due to the fact that all three (initiating, observing, receiving) are learning situations for the individual. If the victim observes that the instigator obtains his ends by violent means, he may be

inclined to use violence himself. Further, if he feels that "it does you good," or that he is "the better man for it," then subsequent approval of violent acts can also take on overtones of moral correctness.

Control for sex: Figure 1 also reveals that the relationships between exposure to violence and Interpersonal Violence Approval as consistently lower for women than for men. There are at least two possible reasons for these lower correlations. First, women are subject to more societal pressure to disapprove of violence than are men. As a result, the effects of exposure to violence as learning situation may be considerably dampened for women by the operation of normative factors which tend to suppress approval of violence. A second and equally plausible reason for the lower female correlation derives from the fact that women are less able to defend themselves against violent acts or to employ violence. Thus, the correlation between violence experienced and subsequent approval of violent acts could be lower for women than for men simply because women feel more threatened by violence and because violence is less useful to women.

Control For Socioeconomic Status. Two different measures of socioeconomic status were available. In respect to the first of these, the social class of parents of the respondent (as self-reported), there was no discernable effect on the correlations between exposure to violence and Interpersonal Violence Approval. The correlations for each class are almost identical with those shown in Figure 1 for the total sample.

Repeating the correlations betweenexperiencing violence and approving violence within each of three educational levels showed a tendency for the middle educational group (completed high school through some college) to have slightly lower correlations. We do not have plausible explanation to offer at this time. However, the more important fact seems to be that despite this difference, one would not come to the conclusion that experiencing violence is related to approval of violence in any way which is substantially different

for persons of low or high educational level.

National Violence Approval

Our measure of National Violence Approval is essentially a measure of the approval of warfare as a means of settling disputes between nations. Exposure to interpersonal violence as a child was found to have little relation to National Violence Approval. Correlations between the indices of exposure to violence and National Violence Approval for the total sample and with controls for sex and socioeconomic status ranged from -.05 to .13, with a mean of .05. With regard to national violence, therefore, our hypothesis that exposure to violence leads to approval of violence was not substantiated.

The lack of relationships between the indices of exposure to violence and National Violence Approval is probably due to the large difference in the type of violence measured by each of the indices. The exposure to violence indexes focus on acts of face-to-face interpersonal violence committed primarily among family members and friends. The index of National Violence Approval, however, is concerned with acts of war. Thus, the types of violence measured by each index are clearly distinct. To hit or kick a friend or family member is a far cry from engaging in acts of war. Therefore, effects of learning from exposure to interpersonal violence are substantially lower with respect to attitudes toward war, than with attitudes toward interpersonal violence. It is possible that if our indices had measured exposure to acts of war, then we might have found a higher relationship of childhood violence with National Violence Approval.

Controls. Neither sex of respondents, parents' social class, nor level of education had any appreciable effect upon the relationship of childhood violence to National Violence Approval.

Childhood Violence and Political Violence Approval

Exposure to interpersonal violence was found to be moderately cor-

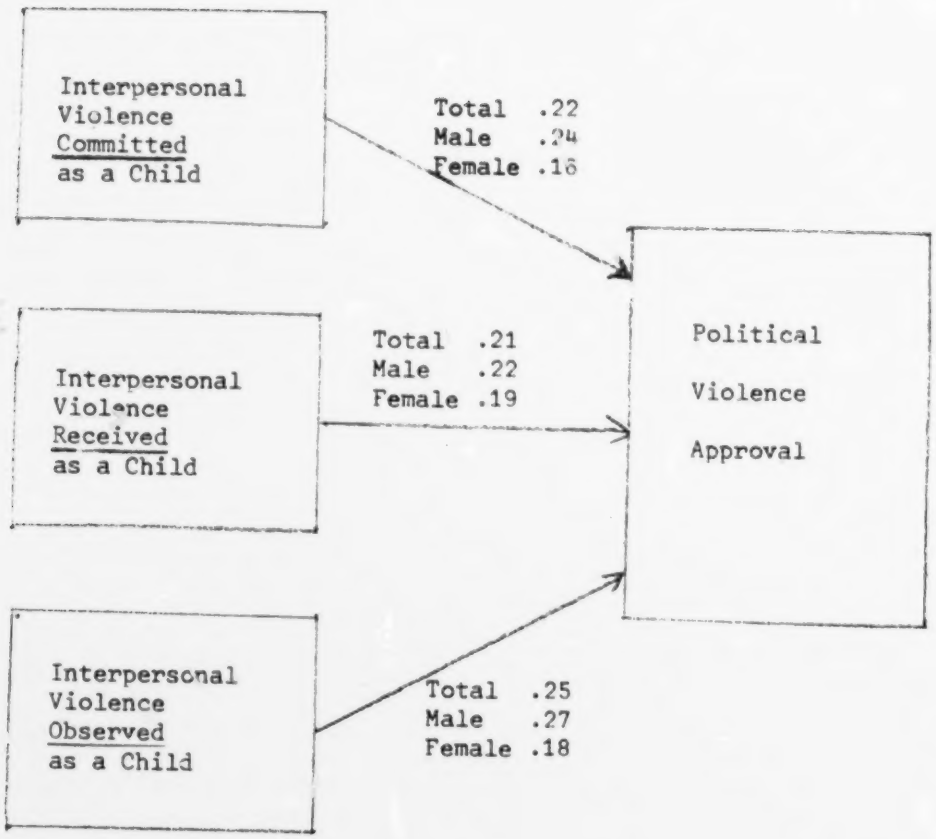

Figure 2. Correlation Between Exposure to Violence and Approval of Political Violence for Total Sample and By Sex.

related with Political Violence Approval (Figure 2), especially among men.

Figure 2 about here

Furthermore, the correlations remained roughly the same when controls were introduced for parent's social class and respondents level of education: The subgroup correlations ranged from .24 to .44 with a mean of .29.

Why was approval of political violence found to be associated with violence experienced in childhood, whereas approval of war is not associated with childhood violence? We suggest that it stems from differences in the mode of expressing violence: What is learned by observing, committing, and being the object of acts of interpersonal violence does not provide a direct script for the kind of actions which dominate modern technological warfare: operating computers, arming bombs, or even driving a tank. On the other hand, the acts of violence carried out as political protest most often do involve direct person-to-person confrontation. Consequently, exposure to interpersonal violence in childhood can (and these data suggest does) provide a more direct model for acts of political violence.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper reports a test of the idea that the experience of violence in childhood is one of the factors which leads to the approval of violence as a means of achieving socially desirable goals, such as preserving national honor and integrity, securing desired political ends, and maintaining social control in such face to face situations as parent-child, husband-wife, and student-teacher. The data were obtained from a national sample survey conducted in 1968(N = 1175).

Measures were constructed to index three different aspects of violence experienced in childhood: observing violence, carrying out violent acts, and being the victim of violence. The hypothesis that violence in childhood is related to adult approval of violence was tested by computing the correlation of each of these measures of "violence experienced" to indexes of "violence approval."

It was found that approval of interpersonal violence is the aspect of violence approval most highly related to experiencing violence as a child.

Approval of violence for political ends was almost as highly correlated, but approval of violence in international relations, i.e., war, was uncorrelated with violence experienced in childhood. The correlations tended to be slightly higher for males than for females and to be essentially similar for different socioeconomic status groups.

At the individual level the finding that childhood violence experiences are most highly correlated with approval of interpersonal violence seems to support the role-model theory of violence which the study was designed to test. This is because the kind of violence experienced as a child, as measured in this study, is primarily face-to-face violence between intimates. At the other extreme, the near zero correlations between childhood violence and approval of war, reflect the fact that the face-to-face violence indexed by our measures of violence experienced does not provide a role model for acts of war. Thus, we conclude that a reduction in the interpersonal violence experienced by children in the US would not importantly affect American attitudes towards war, but it could well lead to a reduction in the level of approval of interpersonal violence on the part of the adult population when these children reach maturity. This in turn, would be one factor which could bring about a reduction in the high level of violence which characterizes American society.

It is always hazardous to move from data at the individual level to conclusions which refer to a society. But since we feel that violence is a societal phenomenon as well as an individual phenomenon, it is imperative that such linkages be developed. As a start in this direction, we suggest that the findings of this study are most consistent with what have called a social structural theory of violence, as contrasted with a culture of violence theory. The two theories are more complementary to each other than opposed, but they differ in their causal emphasis. This difference has important implications for steps which can be taken to reduce violence.

The structural theory of violence is developed more fully in another

paper (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1973). The aspect of this theory considered in this paper is the social-learning and role-modeling which takes place in childhood. In propositional form, this part of the theory is as follows:

1. The more violence is present in the social structure during childhood, the more the person learns to use violence.

2. For any set of behaviors which is characteristic of a population, there will develop a normative counterpart which rationalizes and justifies that behavior.

3. Assuming the validity of Proposition 2, and taking the data presented in this paper as evidence supporting Proposition 1, we conclude that the culture of violence characterizing American society is, at least in part, attributable to the high level of violence experienced during the formative years of childhood.

It follows from the above that segments of the society which have high levels of violence will also have a culture which justifies and supports violence. This is the "culture of violence." However, it also follows from these propositions that efforts to alter the level of violence in these sectors of society by "educational" and other activities designed to change the culture are not likely to be successful unless the underlying "social structure of violence," can be altered.[6/]

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FOOTNOTES

*Paper presented at the 1973 meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association. This paper is based on the senior author's M.A. thesis (1973). The preparation of this paper and part of the data analysis was supported by NIMH grant number 15521. The authors are indebted to Professor Sheldon G. Levy for providing a copy of the data tape containing the results of the survey conducted for the Media Task Force of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969) and to Richard J. Gelles for suggestions in revising the paper.

1. Although this hypothesis and the reasoning underlying it places the emphasis on the social structure of interpersonal relations as the causal factor, rather than on the cultural norms and values to which the child was verbally exposed, the two elements can not be clearly separated in our research. This is because those respondents who had a high exposure to actual violence may also have been exposed to norms approving violence. However attitudes and behavior are by no means the same. The typical correlation in fact is quite low. Our structural explanation is, at the minimum, a plausible hypothesis which has not yet been empirically tested.

It will take a longitudinal study to nail down more definitively the relative roles of cultural norms and structural factors. More specifically, a two way analysis of variance is called for in which factor A is some measure of norms approving violence and factor B is a measure of some social organizational factor thought to influence violence. Our prediction is that the main effect for B will be greater than the main effect for A and that there will be a strong interaction effect located in the A2, B2 cell.

A further limitation of the scope of this study is indicated by the phrase "violence as a means of social control." Physical violence is a complex phenomenon, whose elements or aspects must be clearly specified to enable knowledge to advance. In the case of violence, we have elsewhere indicated (Steinmetz and Straus, 1973) that at least two major dimensions must be considered: (A) Whether the use of physical force is an end in itself--

"expressive" violence; or whether physical restraint, pain, or injury is intended as a means of inducing another person or group to carry out some act--"instrumental" violence. (B) Whether the violence under consideration is required or authorized under the rules of the society or social group of the violent actor--"legitimate" violence; or whether it is prohibited or depreciated by the society or group--"illigitimate"violence. The combination of these two dimensions produces a four-fold taxonomy of violence (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1973): Expressive-legitimate, Expressive-illigitimate, Instrumental-legitimate, and Instrumental-illigitimate. Using this taxonomy, the aspect of examined in this paper is limited to what we have called instrumental violence, and even more specifically, the question of the degree of approval which would place such violence in the instrumental-ligitimate cell of the taxonomy.

2. However, one longitudinal study which measured exposure to television violence in the third grade found that the amount of such violence observed is correlated with aggression scores obtained at age 18 (Lefkowitz et al., 1972).

3. The interviewing was conducted in October 1968 by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. The following is a description of the sample provided by Baker and Ball (1969).

> The total sample comprised 1,176 interviews with persons 18 years of age and older. Respondents were selected by means of an area probability sampling procedure which involved 100 sampling points, or "clusters," of approximately 12 interviews each. Instructions from the Harris home office directed interviewers to specific blocks or other geographical units and then designated systematic procedures for determining which individual within the houshold should be interviewed. No callbacks were employed; if no interview was obtained at an address, the interviewer attempted an interview at the next residence, following a preprescribed route. Interviewing among adults took place October 1-8.

4. The correlations are somewhat higher for the males and lower for the females:

Indexes	Sample		
	Total	Male	Female
IVE - IVO	.59	.60	.44
IVE - IVC	.59	.63	.41
IVC - IVO	.52	.49	.43

5. A similar pattern of correlations as found when socioeconomic status was controlled by computing the correlations within each of three educational levels.

6. Of course, the elements making up the social structure of violence are far more numerous than the role-model aspects considered in this paper. See Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1973 for an outline; and Straus, 1973 for an example of the use of general systems theory to put some of these elements into a cybernetic model.